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ABSTRACT

The need for all-women colleges is discussed in this, the second of four transcripts of radio programs on college today. Dialogue on the following subjects is provided: the need for women's colleges; women comment on life at all-women's colleges; history of women's colleges; education at Hood College, Frederick, Maryland; Hood students' descriptions of academic and social life there; women's colleges and professional careers; discussion of Vassar by an administrator, two professors, and a student; the women at Bryn Mawr College; the women at Smith College; one critic of women's colleges; comments from a former women's college president and two women professors at Hood College; and a report of the cluster system at Scripps College. (SPG)

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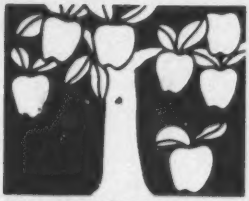

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Options in Education
TRANSCRIPT:

Program No. 120:

"COLLEGE TODAY: WOMEN's COLLEGES"
Part Two
May 15, 1978

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
THE NEED FOR WOMEN'S COLLEGES - Marjorie Bell Chambers, president of the American Association of University Women	2
WOMEN COMMENT ON LIFE AT ALL-WOMEN'S COLLEGES	3
THE HISTORY OF WOMEN'S COLLEGES - Marsha Sharp, of the Women's College Coalition, Washington, D.C.	4-5
EDUCATION AT HOOD COLLEGE, FREDERICK, MARYLAND - Martha Church, President of Hood College	5
HOOD STUDENTS TALK ABOUT ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL LIFE THERE	5-6
WOMEN'S COLLEGES AND PROFESSIONAL CAREERS - Elizabeth Tidball, a professor at The George Washington University Medical Center, Washington, D.C.	6-7
COMMENTS FROM A STUDENT AT VASSAR	7
A VASSAR ADMINISTRATOR DESCRIBES THE COLLEGE - Natalie Marshall, Vice President of Student Affairs at Vassar College	7-8
TWO PROFFESORS DESCRIBE ACADEMIC LIFE AT VASSAR - Kenneth Kohfert and Peggy Mackey	8-9
THE WOMEN AT BRYN MAWR COLLEGE - Morton Baratz, president of the American Association of University Professors, Washington, D.C.	9
MORE FROM A VASSAR STUDENT	10
MORE FROM NATALIE MARSHALL	10
THE WOMEN AT SMITH COLLEGE - Jill Conway, President of Smith College	10-11
ONE CRITIC OF WOMEN'S COLLEGE - Liva Baker, author of I'm Radcliffe, Fly Me	11-12
CATHOLIC WOMEN'S COLLEGES - Sister Alberta Huber, president of the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, Minnesota	12
COMMENTS FROM A FORMER WOMEN'S COLLEGE PRESIDENT - Marjorie Bell Chambers, head of the American Association of University Women	13-14
COMMENTS FROM TWO WOMEN PROFESSORS AT HOOD COLLEGE - Elizabeth Chang and Barbara Hetrick	14-15
A REPORT ON THE CLUSTER SYSTEM AT SCRIPPS COLLEGE - Anna Sklar, from Los Angeles	15-16
MORE FROM MARTHA CHURCH	16

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CHILD: A...

CHILD: B...

CHILD: C...

MAN: D...

WOMAN: H...

MAN: I...

MAN: J...

CHILD: K...

MAN: L...

TEENAGER: M...

WOMAN: N...

WOMAN: O...

WOMAN: P...

MERROW: T-I-O-N-S -- options -- OPTIONS IN EDUCATION From the ABC's of pre-school to the alphabet soup of government programs, this is OPTIONS IN EDUCATION.

* * *

REINHARDT: Do you feel that you've gained something special from having gone to a women's college?

STUDENT: Oh, definitely. I think that it's great to be able to sit in a class and not have, you know, the teacher biased as you do sometimes in a co-ed situation. Sometimes, I always got the feeling that they would call on the males. They figured that they would know more, or, you know, be more interesting to listen to. So here, with just women in the classroom, it's really interesting to get the different ideas and really feel like you're important.

TEACHER: There was a legend that circulated at Bryn Mawr that the students were so passive that they would take literal notes of whatever was said; and the legend has it that some faculty member came in one day and lectured in absolute gibberish for an hour, and the girls dutifully took down the notes and never raised a question.

STUDENT: You have to go out, sort of off the campus to find your social life. Whereas on co-ed campuses, it's right there. And in a way, that's good Because when you're here, you can spend your time studying and you aren't pressured into the parties and everyting during the week

MERROW: Some of you out there may not remember the late 60 s and early 70's on campus Or you may only recall the protests and the war and all that.

REINHARDT: But on a lot of college campuses, and firmly lodged in a lot of heads, was the belief that coeducation was better education. The way to produce well-rounded, well adjusted people, men and women, was by having them go to college together.

MERROW: A bandwagon is what it was, rolling along and sweeping up everything in its path.

REINHARDT: Take women's colleges for example.

MERROW: And the bandwagon nearly did.

REINHARDT: In 1960, about 20 years ago, there were 300 all-women colleges. Today, there are only around 125. Now, to be sure, some of them -- 35 in all -- folded because of money problems. But nearly 135 jumped on the bandwagon and became co-ed or merged with other colleges.

MERROW: But what about the 125 which resisted the pressure, which avoided the bandwagon? How are they doing today, now that the bandwagon has slowed down?

REINHARDT: Or maybe even turned around.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow.

REINHARDT: And I'm Barbara Reinhardt. And this week on OPTIONS IN EDUCATION we're going to try to pick up the tracks of that bandwagon and see where they lead. We're going to tell you what happened to one of those women's colleges that did go co-ed.

MERROW: And we're also going to report on some of the women's colleges that resisted the pressure, that said "no" to coeducation. How are they doing these days?

REINHARDT: Actually, we have a larger question in mind. And that is: Do we still need all-women's colleges?

MERROW: Today, 2.6 percent of the women who go to college choose all-women's institutions. That's all. Only 2.6 percent.

REINHARDT: That's right. There are about four million women undergraduates today, and only about 105,000 go to places like Smith, Hood, Wellesley, Wilson, Barnard, St. Catherine's, and St. Mary's.

MERROW: Why bother to have single sex schools when there are laws mandating equal educational opportunity for men and women? After all, you don't teach physics differently to a woman than to a man. Aren't co-ed colleges a better place for women to get an equal education?

REINHARDT: Women's college advocates say "no, not necessarily," John. One such advocate is Marjorie Bell Chambers, president of the American Association of University Women and the former president of Colorado Women's College and a graduate of Mt. Holyoke, a women's college in Massachusetts. NPR's Katharine Ferguson asked Chambers, "Why the renewal of interest in women's colleges?"

MARJORIE BELL CHAMBERS ON THE NEED FOR WOMEN'S COLLEGES

CHAMBERS: I think the women's movement has reinforced the concept not only of sisterhood but the concept of needing a female network where you do have to put it together for yourself as a woman before you can go out and compete in the man's world for a man's job, which is basically what our society requires. Between age 17 to 21 or 22 is when all young people find their own identity. And that we think a woman is strengthened by finding that identity in a system designed to support her, rather than in a system designed to support men -- which is what you find at the co-ed institutions. So I think those people who are connected with women's colleges, and certainly all of the alumni of those colleges are being very forceful in their words today, saying "Keep the women's college."

FERGUSON: But to me, that sounds as if it's somewhat unrealistic because women, in order to get high-level, prestigious jobs, are going to have to compete with men. Shouldn't they be started off right from the beginning, competing with men, and this is life -- this is it.

CHAMBERS: I believe a study was recently published in Change magazine that the young women who went to Princeton went in with higher self-image than they left. In other words, until you have really put yourself together, that you can can confront a man on an equal basis, if you are not sure of yourself you will collapse faster. This is the reason on the co-ed campus you have the women's center. Because she does put up with a put-down from the male professor. She

does keep quiet in the classroom where the male colleagues tend to predominate. And she has to go somewhere to put herself back together, and she goes to the women's center or she goes to women's studies programs which do enroll men, but at least they tend to have more women or equal numbers of men and women in those classes. Where you have the tremendously large university, with only a few women in the classroom, they tend to keep quiet; they don't raise their hand and ask the question. They read well, perform well on the exams, but they haven't had the fast intellectual interchange of mind and tongue and therefore they can't compete. But the woman who's at least got her tongue loose in a women's college by debating with the professor and with her sisters is far more ready to use that skill with men by the time she enters graduate school or goes into the world of work.

REINHARDT: Marjorie Bell Chambers, president of the American Association of University Women. She talked with NPR's Katharine Ferguson.

* * *

HENRY: Because of the prejudice that has existed, particularly in the sciences, against women, it might be very useful for a woman to come to an environment where she is supported, where she can in fact find out what she can do without competing and discover for herself that indeed she can do these things. She can be a scientist. She can study mathematics and like it. Whereas in a co-ed institution, she may feel, actually, a lot of peer pressure not to like these things because a woman is not supposed to.

MERROW: Don Henry teaches physics at Wilson College, an all-women's school in southern Pennsylvania. He too feels a women's college provides the kind of support many college age women need.

REINHARDT: And so do these two students I found in the Student Union at Wilson.

STUDENT: Well, I think at the time when we graduated in '74, there was still kind of the axe hanging over our head that if you went to a co-ed school everything was centered around the men. The men would be the president of the student senate. The men would be the stars on the athletic teams, and so on. The men would be this, the men would be that. But, coming here I think a woman has more of a chance, obviously. A woman would have to be the president of WCJ, the college government system here. The women would be the stars on the athletic teams, and so on. So, that's what I wanted.

STUDENT: I think it's necessary to emphasize the fact that in an unbiased atmosphere, the competition still exists as it would in a co-ed atmosphere. But I think because of the lack of restrictions that are imposed on you here, you're more willing to apply yourself.

REINHARDT: What then makes you different than women who would go to a co-ed school? Are you more realistic? Are you more interested in government? Or are you more bitter?

STUDENT: I don't think it has anything to do with being bitter. It's just that our self-motivations lead us in a different direction. Because here you have the sole ability to concentrate on academics. There aren't the social pressures that exist in a co-ed environment. And it's not that we want to restrain ourselves from social contact and emphasize solely the academic atmosphere of the college. But we just see that for the period of four years as our primacy interest.

REINHARDT: Are the women here more academically -- more interested in academic achievement?

STUDENT: Yeah. I think so. I agree with Glenda. And I think one thing that Wilson College has taught me is that, it's taught me the true relationship between a woman and a woman, and I think, if anything, I've learned to become independent, more independent than so when I went to a public high school, and it was co-ed.

REINHARDT: Students at Wilson College in southern Pennsylvania.

MERROW: Wilson is not one of the elite seven sisters.

REINHARDT: That is, Smith, Mt. Holyoke, Vassar, Bryn Mawr, Radcliffe, Barnard, and Wellesley, the seven eastern schools established as women's colleges in the late 1800's.

MERROW: And partly because it lacks the prestige of a Smith or a Barnard, Wilson was particularly hard hit by declining enrollments in the early 1970's. In fact, Wilson's enrollment dropped from 700 in 1968 to 260 this year.

REINHARDT: However, last fall's freshman class was up 60 percent over the year before. And Wilson's admissions office expects next year's freshmen class to be up another 30 percent.

MERROW: And Wilson was in the black last year for the first time in nine years.

REINHARDT: Although Wilson remains a women's college, its administrators did consider going co-ed.

MERROW: In the late 1960's, most women's colleges at least considered going co-ed. At that time, coeducation was thought to be the way to give women an education equal to that of men. The theory was that if women were to compete with men for jobs in the professional world, they should learn to compete with men in college.

REINHARDT: Marsha Sharp of the Women's College Coalition, a Washington-based organization to which 60 women's colleges belong, says the interest in co-education came from the men's colleges and not from the women's.

MARSHA SHARP ON THE INTEREST IN WOMEN'S COLLEGES

SHARP: We all think of the time -- and you just said it -- when so many women's colleges chose to become coeducational. In fact, if there was a rush to coeducation, it came from the other side. It is the formerly men's institutions; if you think of the Princetons or the Yales or Notre Dame University or small colleges, many of them -- for all kinds of reasons, some of them philosophical and some of them clearly financial -- chose to admit women. There's some rather interesting educational thinking (I think a lot of people understand and agree with this) that holds that men tend to function better in environments where there are women. So it was attractive for the men's colleges to open their doors to women. Large numbers of women's colleges, in fact, have not made the choice to become coeducational. There are certainly some. But it was not a wholesale movement in any sense. Those that did, I think they were thinking in terms of both social and financial reasons. If you think back to the late 60's very much has changed in our thinking about women since that time. I expect that these colleges thought they might be able to attract more students -- both men students and women students, if they had male students on campus -- and they were also, I'm sure, were thinking that by making this choice they were in effect doubling the potential pool of students, if suddenly your target is all high school students.

That period of change was really right before the women's movement gained the kind of intensity and momentum that it has now. If all of a sudden in 1972 or '73 people began to think very differently about the kinds of institutions that best served women. Those women's colleges that remained women's colleges are faring very well. The last two, three, four years since the Women's College Coalition has been keeping track of these kinds of statistics, applications and enrollments at those colleges have gone up, and they've gone up faster than has been true for higher education as a whole. In effect, women's institutions right now are terribly timely institutions, and the colleges that have stayed so are right in the middle of that kind of social change.

REINHARDT: Is it true then that women learn better when men are not around?

SHARP: I don't think we need to talk about it in terms of a learn better

or not learn better sort of question. But certainly we can take a look for a minute at why somebody might want to go to a women's college, what kind of learning values they would have. We know that career concerns are very important to students right now. We also know that a number of studies have suggested, and we can go back and talk about this if you like, that women graduates of women's colleges are more apt to achieve certain kinds of career distinction than women graduates of coeducational colleges. We know that the percentages of students who major in math, in science, in business administration, career related fields like that at women's colleges, is two or three times higher than the national average. And that's terribly important when you think about the kinds of fields that are opening up -- growth fields for men and women, but particularly now for women. Women need quantitative and scientific skills.

For some reason, the learning environment at these colleges works to encourage women to go into what used to be considered non-traditional fields.

REINHARDT: Marsha Sharp of the Women's College Coalition in Washington, D.C.

MERROW: Hood College in Frederick, Maryland is one school which cashed in on the women's movement and on the increased desire of women for careers. Five years ago, college officials surveyed prospective students to see what they wanted in a college. They found students wanted degrees that would get them jobs, good jobs.

REINHARDT: President Martha Church says Hood made some changes and nearly tripled its enrollment in five years.

MARTHA CHURCH TALKS ABOUT HOOD COLLEGE

CHURCH: We recommited ourselves to being a women's college. The faculty basically re-did every course at the college, saying that if it is a women's college, then it's important that female authors be emphasized; lost aspects of female history be emphasized; writers, speakers, the whole focus. We upgraded our language. We really went back and looked at how we say things. Do we use the pronoun "he?" If we did, why did we? Why aren't we using "she?"

REINHARDT: Do you think that whole emphasis on women came about as a result of what was called then the women's lib movement?

CHURCH: There's no question that growing consciousness on the part of women and the women's movement did make a significant difference. I think our upswing in consciousness about women and their needs really benefited the college enormously. We're very happy we did not get on the coeducational bandwagon.

REINHARDT: Martha Church, president of Hood College, a women's school in Frederick, Maryland. Some students at Hood College told me that going to a women's college has some disadvantages and some advantages. The lack of men on campus, it turns out, can be both.

STUDENTS AT HOOD COLLEGE

STUDENT: I think when girls look at a women's college, the first thing they think of is social life: it's gonna be awful. But I don't think that any more girls, on Saturday night, at Hood sit alone than they would on a co-ed campus. Just having the guys there doesn't guarantee you're going to have a date. But the bad part about it, negatively, is that you don't learn -- I don't think you have as many male friends. When the guys come here to meet you, they come here to meet you as a female. You don't get the easy-going relationship with men a lot of times unless you really try for it yourself.

STUDENT: Sometimes I feel that it would be really neat if there were guys around, you could just call up the dorm and say, "Hey, we're having a beer party, come on over." And the men wouldn't assume anything. You were just inviting them over just to have fun. And I miss having guys around just to kind of hack around with as brothers, you know, go out and play baseball or frisbee or whatever like that.

STUDENT: I think you become closer to the women here, only because you

aren't competing for boyfriends or whatever. You know, you aren't going after this guy or that guy. And you become closer to your roommate or your friends, because you aren't out there looking for a boyfriend or husband, or whatever. And which I think is good.

STUDENT: I don't know, basically in the real world, women don't always tend to like other women, and you learn to like women more, I think, when you go to an all-girls school. Hood might help you to feel that you can succeed in a career, but as far as marriage, I think the idea that most women want to get married hasn't changed around Hood.

MERROW: Students at Hood College which is for women only.

REINHARDT: What was it you told me about the divorce rate among Dartmouth graduates?

MERROW: When I was at Dartmouth, it was an all-male school, and the statistic we kept hearing was that the divorce rate for Dartmouth graduates was the highest in the country. The point was: we weren't around women enough to know how to act. I never did find out if that statistic was true, and then Dartmouth became co-ed.

REINHARDT: Well, Hood College students may have a similar statistic about their school, for all I know. They do talk about men and marriage.

MERROW: But I noticed that their conversation kept coming back to careers.

REINHARDT: While we're talking about coeducation, I'd like to point out that one of the arguments in its favor is that, supposedly, it's better for the men. They do better if there are women around. Does that sound just the slightest bit sexist?

MERROW: Well, on the other hand, there's some evidence that women actually do better in an all-female college environment. That is, at a women's college. Women graduating from women's colleges are more than twice as likely to be cited for professional achievement in "Who's Who" of American women.

REINHARDT: Here's an easy riddle for you. What do Susan Stamberg, Linda Wertheimer, Barbara Walters, Margaret Mead, and Katherine Hepburn have in common?

MERROW: They've all been on National Public Radio?

REINHARDT: Well, no. But they're all graduates of women's colleges.

MERROW: Elizabeth Tidball did that study of achieving women. She's a professor at George Washington University's Medical Center. She told Barbara that most of the women cited in "Who's Who" were professionals, that is, business executives, artists, reporters, educators, doctors, and so forth.

ELIZABETH TIDBALL ON PROFESSIONAL WOMEN

TIDBALL: The problem is, why aren't there more of these women proportionally graduating from the coeducational institutions? Because that's where most women receive their education. I believe that there must be lots of women entering coeducational institutions who get lost to us, who get lost to the careers and so on because the environments in those institutions are not assisting those women to the extent that they could.

REINHARDT: What is it then that is different about women's colleges? Why are they about two times more likely to be cited in "Who's Who?"

TIDBALL: Well, I do know that there is a strong positive correlation, relationship, between the number of women faculty and the number of women students who subsequently become career achievers. The more women faculty, the more likely are women graduates to subsequently, to be cited for their career achievement. And, as it turns out, the women's colleges do tend to have a considerably larger number of women faculty per number of women students than do the large majority, in fact, than all coeducational institutions. So, maybe that

is indeed part of the answer.

REINHARDT: In the late 60's and early 70's, when Yale and Princeton opened their doors to women, some of the very brightest went there because they were known so well to be academically excellent. If you do the same study twenty or twenty-five years from now, might it not show something quite a bit different from what this one did?

TIDBALL: Of course one would hope so. One would hope that these, that institutions that are accepting women as students would not merely collect their tuition, but would also make some very real efforts to encourage those women, not only if they are first rate educational institutions, not only to provide a strong academic background for them, but would also be encouraging their larger development, their development in terms of their leadership opportunities, of the counselling of them in terms of where they would go and so on. Whether that happens or not, I don't know.

MERROW: Elizabeth Tidball, a professor at The George Washington University Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

REINHARDT: Tidball referred to formerly men's colleges which are now co-ed. What about those formerly women's colleges which are now accepting men? For instance, Vassar College in Poughkeepsie, New York, one of the seven sisters.

A STUDENT AT VASSAR COLLEGE

STUDENT: I wouldn't have come here if it wasn't co-ed. I think a single sex institution is sort of an unreal microcosm. I don't think it's reality.

REINHARDT: Do you think that coeducation at Vassar gives a woman just as good an opportunity to get a great education as women's education did when it was just a women's college?

STUDENT: I do. I had question at first. But now I think you probably have a better chance in that they give you a lot more competition. I mean, you feel in your classes, if guys are dominating class discussion that you've really got to do something about it and join in.

MERROW: Vassar became co-ed in 1969. Financial problems, or a fear of future declining enrollments were not the reasons for the decision, according to Vassar's Vice President of Student Affairs, Natalie Marshall. She says the college wanted to provide women students with an environment closer to the real world, the world that includes men.

REINHARDT: And unlike some other women's colleges, Vassar's pretty isolated. When I visited Vassar recently, Vice President Marshall told me that Vassar simply wanted to provide its students with a more normal social and academic life.

VASSAR COLLEGE ADMINISTRATOR NATALIE MARSHALL

MARSHALL: The fact that there were not men available, except if they were imported for a 48-hour weekend, that you didn't have men who could easily come in on an exchange, in a classroom situation. You couldn't have a casual date with men, with a man for three or four hours. It was a production to invite somebody over to campus.

REINHARDT: When you starting accepting males, did you find that you had to reduce the standards because although women, very bright women, might want to go to Yale or Princeton -- which had just gone co-ed -- it seems that not that many bright men wanted to go to what was formerly a women's college.

MARSHALL: Untrue. We did not reduce standards and, when you look at the objective standards for evaluation of a student, you find that our men come out with higher SAT's, rank and class and so forth, than the women. This has always been true here at Vassar. If we had wanted to go to absolute equal numbers, perhaps, we might have changed the standards. We never would agree to changing standards. And we do have, well, somewhat over 40 percent male students on campus at this point.

REINHARDT: Might one of the reasons that the men have better SAT scores be that the brightest women are now going to Yale and Princeton.

MARSHALL: No, not true. The quality of our women has improved with the presence of men.

MERROW: Vassar's Natalie Marshall, Vice President of Student Affairs.

REINHARDT: When Vassar first considered going co-ed there was a fear of losing qualified women to newly co-ed schools like Princeton and Yale.

MERROW: Vassar became co-ed in 1969, and in the early 70's, Vassar did see declining SAT scores. But, SAT scores have been declining nationwide, and, in fact, in the last three years, scores of incoming Vassar freshmen have crept up five or ten points.

REINHARDT: Another point Dr. Marshall made was that after coeducation, just as many Vassar graduates were going right on to graduate school. Well, that's literally true, but a bit misleading. In fact, the number of women graduates going on to graduate school has dropped since Vassar went co-ed. In 1968, the year before Vassar went co-ed, 32 percent of women were going right on to graduate school. Last year, 30 percent went on, and two years ago, only 28 percent chose graduate school. These figures support one of Elizabeth Tidball's findings: that when a women's college goes co-ed, the number of women going on to graduate school drops.

MERROW: But, of course, these figures could be reflecting something else. That with a tight job market in recent years, fewer women graduates of Vassar think that a degree in law or a Ph.D. in English history will land them a job.

REINHARDT: The decline in women going to graduate school is one measurable change since men came to Vassar. There are others. Some teachers I talked to at Vassar noticed a difference in women students in the classroom.

CO-ED CLASSES AT VASSAR

PROFESSOR: I've asked some of the women and they say, "Well, I don't think I know what to contribute." Men never say that.

MERROW: That's Kenneth Kohfert, an economics professor at Vassar. Barbara talked with him and with Peggy Markey, a philosophy professor, about how women do in the classroom now that there are men on campus.

KOHFERT: In most classes that I've taught, all of the men who are good students speak up and try to prove that they really are good students. While, invariably there will be one or two women who do really excellent jobs on all the exams, and yet one will have no idea who they are until one seeks them out, because they never say anything. On the other hand, you also find men who are not very good students who make a point of talking a lot. By and large, the men are more talkative and may dominate some conversations.

REINHARDT: But why do women feel this way? If they were in classes with only women, do you think they would be more likely to come out?

KOHFERT: I've been told that that was so when Vassar was all women. That women didn't feel as discouraged from speaking up even if they didn't know what they talking about.

REINHARDT: Do you think that Vassar has lost something by going co-ed?

KOHFERT: At Vassar, before coeducation, a fair number of women came here, had relatively few contacts, social contacts, with men. And they became much more self-sufficient anyway. Now that is not so. Either women have lots of social relations with men in which, from what I can tell, the relationships tend to be pretty traditional on the whole. The women follow the men around and listen to them and smile at what they say and that sort of thing. And the men sort of feel that they're in charge. Or else, the women don't have these same social contacts and they feel left out. When there weren't any men around at all, women didn't worry about the absence of men. That was something they chose and

that's something they were happy with.

REINHARDT: Do you think the fact that Vassar is a former women's college attracts a different kind of men student?

MARKEY: Well, I think yes in both senses. I think the men that it attracts in the sense that the men who come to Vassar because they want to come to Vassar, are often among the best students, both in human terms and in intellectual terms. But I think that Vassar, like a lot of small private colleges, gets many students who would rather have gone to Harvard, Yale, Princeton, Dartmouth, or somewhere else, could not get accepted -- often not for a very good reason; I mean, often, their scores are just as good as the people who got accepted -- So they're disappointed. They start life at Vassar disappointed and it really never changes.

REINHARDT: Do you think Vassar did a disservice to women by going co-ed?

MARKEY: I've thought about this a lot. I think the answer is no for this reason. I think that it's probably true that women spoke up more in classes when there were no men. But women today who want to achieve have to achieve in a world with two sexes. Now, I don't think that simply putting people together teaches you how to get along in a world with two sexes, but at the same time, I think isolating you doesn't teach you either. So that's why I said I thought there should be a greater emphasis on admissions of people who would share the common goal of making an egalitarian society. And in that way, I think that there could be better training of the women to speak up because they would be in an atmosphere they felt that their contributions would be valued.

MERROW: Kenneth Kohfert and Peggy Markey, two professors at Vassar.

REINHARDT: But they weren't at Vassar before it became co-ed. On the other hand, Morton Baratz has had an opportunity to teach in both all-men's and all-women's colleges. Baratz, who's now president of the American Association of University Professors, told me he found women students to be somewhat reticent in class, even at Pennsylvania's Bryn Mawr, where classes contained only women.

MORTON BARATZ DESCRIBES WOMEN AT BRYN MAWR

BARATZ: There was a legend that circulated at Bryn Mawr that the students were so passive, they would take literal notes of whatever was said, and the legend has it that some faculty member came in one day and lectured in absolute gibberish for an hour and the girls dutifully took down the notes and never raised a question. I'm sure it was a legend. I think it was a vicious legend. They would have hollered. On the other hand, it was necessary for me each year to provoke the kind of free and easy interchange, as opposed to the lecturer and the passive note-taker, to say something that was so hopefully outrageous that the students got mad, and then once we got past that the interchanges were just as substantive and thoughtful and provoking with the girls as they were with the boys.

REINHARDT: What was the outrageous thing that you would sometimes use to get them to come out and be willing to question things. You would say . . .

BARATZ: If I were talking about the national debt, I would say, "It doesn't matter how big the national debt goes; you just borrow forever and without limit." And that was bound to provoke someone, and then I could gradually back off from it. That sort of illustration.

BARBARA: What would the girls say when you said that?

BARATZ: Well, most of them, if the thing were sufficiently outrageous, would immediately say, "Well, that just doesn't sound right." And then ask them why it didn't sound right, and from there on the conversation was open and they became convinced that I was not going to stand there and lecture at them; that I was going to expect them to argue with me, fight with me, tell me when I was wrong. And I was wrong on occasion, even though I have been teaching this for a long time.

REINHARDT: Morton Baratz, president of the American Association of University Professors in Washington, D.C.

MORE FROM A VASSAR STUDENT

STUDENT: Last year, the entire SGA, which is the student government, was run by men, which I just thought was absurd. I mean not just the president, the vice president, the secretary, the treasurer, which really upset me terribly. Because I felt that, God, we've had 150, what, 60, years worth -- not quite, no that's too much, more like 120 -- years of women's school, of really strong and progressive women's school. And if you men walk in, I think that's all of our problems; we've all be socialized to feel that way. But there was a backlash against that, which I think was good. The next year, everyone voted for the woman candidate, I'm sure partially because she was a woman.

MERROW: One commonly held belief is that when men begin attending formerly all-women's colleges, they take over all the leadership roles. That is, become president of the student body, editor of the newspaper, that sort of thing.

REINHARDT: Well Vassar has experienced some of that sort of thing but only three men have been student government presidents in the nine years of coeducation.

MERROW: Women are the still the majority; the ratio is about six to four.

REINHARDT: All in all, I got the impression that Vassar students feel pretty good about coeducation. And Dr. Natalie Marshall, Vice President of Student Affairs, says the uneasiness students and teachers felt at first is now gone.

MORE FROM NATALIE MARSHALL

MARSHALL: The college is not self-conscious of its status as a coeducational college. It's not a doubt; we are a coeducational college. We look forward, we don't... And we certainly are concerned with preserving the rights for women, but we're concerned also with preserving the rights of our male students. And we're comfortable with ourselves.

REINHARDT: Do you feel that you're really doing something to help male students be liberated too?

MARSHALL: Yes indeed. I think a man that graduates from Vassar has a very special awareness that he is going out into a society where he must compete with women that are every bit his equal. And, my son didn't happen to go to Vassar, but I would have been very proud had he chosen to go here.

REINHARDT: So you really think it worked at Vassar. But so much of the information that I've read recently about women's colleges indicates that there's a trend going back toward having women's colleges. More students want to go, more women want to go to women's colleges. And Vassar is now co-ed.

MARSHALL: I think there's room for both. But I think for us coeducation was the appropriate answer.

MERROW: Dr. Natalie Marshall of Vassar College.

REINHARDT: Coeducation may work at Vassar. But Smith College, another of the seven sisters, feels that women only is the right policy for it.

MERROW: Smith went through some soul-searching on the co-ed question, about four years worth of studying the pros and cons. At first when students were polled, the majority thought it was a good idea. That was in 1969, during the rush to coeducation at similar institutions like Vassar and Yale.

REINHARDT: But a few years later, in 1972, students were asked again and said, "No." They were satisfied with Smith the way it was and still is: all women.

MERROW: Dale Connally asked Smith president Jill Conway about the pressures on Smith to consider going co-ed.

JILL CONWAY, PRESIDENT OF SMITH COLLEGE

CONWAY: I think the major reason was that Yale and Harvard, which were

two schools of similar academic aspiration and with which Smith had close ties in the past, were both making the decision either to admit women or, in the case of Harvard, to become co-residential.

CONNALLY: Why do you think that in 1972 they decided not to go coeducational?

CONWAY: Well, I think on the part of students, the feeling was very strong that the benefits of a separate institution for women far outweighed the advantages of coeducation. As far as the trustees and the alumni body were concerned, I think there's a very strong commitment on their part to maintain their tradition at Smith and keep it strong.

CONNALLY: Do you think tradition is that important?

CONWAY: Yes I do. I suppose I believe that the collective strength that an institution builds over more than a century about a particularly clearly defined mission gives it more and more experience in discharging its mission and changing or diversifying it or blurring it can be a weakness.

MERROW: Smith College president Jill Conway, talking with Dale Connally of member station KSJN in St. Paul, Minnesota. Conway is the first woman president in the history of Smith College.

REINHARDT: And now with the appointment of Mary Patterson McPherson to the presidency of Bryn Mawr College all of the seven sisters have women presidents at the same time for the first time.

MERROW: In fact, women's colleges are more likely to have a woman in the presidency than are co-ed or men's colleges. Forty percent of the women's colleges have female presidents. Overall, only seven percent of the nation's approximately 2,500 colleges have women presidents.

ADVICE FROM A WOMEN'S COLLEGE ALUMNA

REINHARDT: Do you regret having gone to a women's college?

STUDENT: Not at all. How could a student be sorry for something that was absolutely essential in the shaping of their present life? I think that my college experience was for me. I found that there was a real person inside, a person who really wanted to study and learn. I got self-confidence that I doubt I would have allowed myself to achieve in another environment.

* * *

REINHARDT: Not everybody thinks women's colleges are particularly special. Liva Baker thinks that the women's colleges haven't fulfilled their mission to change the status of women in society.

MERROW: In her book, I'm Radcliffe, Fly Me, Liva Baker's especially critical of the seven sisters, one of which, Smith College, she graduated from.

LIVA BAKER, A CRITIC OF WOMEN'S COLLEGES

BAKER: I think if the women's colleges had been doing what they ought to have been doing or what they more or less set up to do, there would have been no need for a women's movement, really, because it would all have been accomplished. They set out as revolutionary institutions and they got the academic part behind them. They got so that they were very good academically; maybe not as good as Harvard, Yale, and Princeton, which was their goal. But, they were probably as good as Amherst, Dartmouth, Williams, that group. So they got that under their belts and they quit. I'm thinking of using a women's college as a laboratory for research on how to educate women and some of the social concerns, and, you know, why women were being whatever they were -- discriminated against. This never came up in a women's college. I mean, you'd think that would be the obvious place for it to come up. But it just never did; I never heard of it.

My prime example is I went to Smith for four years and I was perfectly willing when I got out just to get maybe a job for a couple years, go to Time magazine like they all did, in one of those research jobs; look for a husband, settle down, live exactly the same life my mother had led. The

silliness of it is that the women's college did not point me in any direction except the same old clichés. And, you know, it was a man who said, "Get out of here and do something."

REINHARDT: Your husband, then?

BAKER: Yeah. So. I mean I think that's a classic example where they failed with me, and presumably a number of other people. What if all these people who got so well educated had done something besides go home and settle down. Where would we be now?

MERROW: Liva Baker, author of I'm Radcliffe, Fly Me.

REINHARDT: The seven sisters that Liva Baker is writing about are the best known women's colleges. But there are only seven --

MERROW: -- Actually five. Because two of the seven sisters are co-ed.

REINHARDT: Right. They're just five of the 125 women's colleges. Almost half of the 125 are either Catholic colleges or have historical ties with the Catholic church. Catholic colleges have a few things going for them that non-denominational schools don't.

MERROW: For instance, by and large, the nuns who teach at Catholic women's colleges are paid about half of what their colleagues at non-denominational colleges get.

REINHARDT: And very often the religious order which founded the college gives the land and building to the college rent-free.

MERROW: So that means the operating costs are lower to begin with.

REINHARDT: But still, when the big push for coeducation came in the late 1960's and early 70's, Catholic women's colleges felt the pinch of declining enrollments. Some had to close down; others became co-ed.

MERROW: Others began offering new programs to attract new students. For instance, many Catholic women's colleges offer continuing education programs for older students, men and women.

REINHARDT: But a recent study found that the more Catholic colleges held on to their identity, both as women's and Catholic colleges, the greater their chances for survival.

MERROW: That is, they're more successful in attracting students when they require theology courses, hire nuns as professors, and require chapel attendance, for instance.

REINHARDT: The College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota calls itself the largest Catholic women's college in the country. Eighty percent of the students are Catholic, and all students are required to take four theology courses before they graduate.

MERROW: Sister Alberta Huber, the president of the College of St. Catherine, says the religious mission doesn't dominate the curriculum.

SISTER ALBERTA HUBER ON CATHOLIC WOMEN'S COLLEGES

HUBER: There are many activities that are connected with religion in which many students participate. We find it a little hard to define, to set up a measurement of our students affected by, say, the religious atmosphere on the college, or are they not. I think in general there is a kind of atmosphere that is here and students are aware of it and are affected by it. But I think it's quite possible also that they might come and go and not be affected at all.

MERROW: Sister Alberta Huber, president of the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul, Minnesota. She was interviewed for OPTIONS IN EDUCATION by Dale Connally of station KSJN, St. Paul, Minnesota.

* * *

PROFESSOR: If we all rush into coeducation, we've lost some of the role models, the real opportunities for teaching for women. Opportunities for administrative experience.

PROFESSOR: I felt that role models were necessary. I'd worked with men. I'd gone to school with men, and I though I wanted to experience the other side of it.

PROFESSOR: It never occured to me when I was in college, at a women's college, that it was really quite unlikely, you know, that I could aspire to being a president of a women's college. Because I didn't know when I was looking at the president of Wellesley that there were only four or five female presidents in the entire country twenty-five years ago. Now, we're 120. We're still an endangered species.

MERROW: So far, we've been concentrating on the students at women's colleges, whether they learn better, think more highly of their own abilities, and so forth. But what about the teachers at women's colleges?

REINHARDT: Well, first of all, there are more women teaching at women's colleges, proportionately than at co-ed institutions.

MERROW: And, they're more likely to advance faster. That is, to become full professors. There are three other ranks in college teaching: Associate professor, assistant professor, and instructor. As of 1976, nearly half of the full professors at women's colleges were women.

REINHARDT: And if that doesn't sound like a lot, consider that nationally only eight percent of the full professors were women. That study was done by Dr. Suzanne Howard for the American Association of University Women in Washington, D.C.

MERROW: NPR's Katharine Ferguson asked Marjorie Bell Chambers about the inequities existing between faculty men and women at Colorado Woman's College when she became president in 1976.

MARJORIE BELL CHAMBERS, FORMER WOMEN's COLLEGE PRESIDENT

CHAMBERS: I found in the numbers of women professors that it was pretty much equally divided, male and female. But I was astounded to find that some assistant male professors were earning more than some associate women professors. I was astounded to find no woman full professor. There were five men. I found this disturbing. I think the patriarchal hierarchy existed in the administration. I have the feeling that the students were called "girls" by male administrators and trustees, even though they're adults at age 18 today. So I think we call them women -- maybe a few 17-year-olds. But even on that campus, 47 percent of the student was over 25 years of age. We had the older woman heavily enrolled on that campus. And to keep calling them "girls' is belittling and I think shows a patriarchal concept in the man who is speaking thus.

FERGUSON: Why? I mean, I would expect at a women's college we would find the woman full professors.

CHAMBERS: Remember that private institutions are governed by self-perpetuating boards of directors. And one of the unique features about the board of Colorado Women's College is that they had no elected alumni representatives on the Board. The president of the National Alumni Association was a trustee; but that was only one woman. All other women who were on that board were selected by the trustees, tended to be selected because of their social position or their wealth, or perhaps the possible financial contribution they might make to the college. The idea of putting on dynamic, professional women was really not very strong.

FERGUSON: We talked a lot about what women's colleges can do for women students in terms of self-image support and career goals. But what about from the professional point of view of a woman academic. I mean, have you "made it" if you're a professor at Smith, or is "making it" really becoming a professor at Berkeley?

CHAMBERS: I cannot say that that is really true at Colorado Women's College.

We have two exceptional women professors there, one of whom is nationally recognized for her research on the battered woman, Lenore Walker. And she has just received an excellent grant from the National Institute of Mental Health here in Washington. We had another woman who was an economist, a graduate student of John Galbraith at Harvard. And certainly her publications were well recognized in the community. And she was the woman I moved up to full professor. Unfortunately, she left the college right after I promoted her, and she's now teaching at the University of Denver.

But, I don't think it has to be. And perhaps one of the things that enables women at the small women's colleges to succeed is there are fewer of them, and therefore they have more opportunity to shine and do significant work.

MERROW: Dr. Marjorie Bell Chambers, former president of Colorado Women's College and now head of the American Association of University Women.

* * *

REINHARDT: If you could teach at a Yale or Harvard, would you be at Hood?

PROFESSOR: Probably not, but I don't think that's really a relevant question. You might ask if I could teach at a small, private, coeducational or men's school would I be there, rather than at Hood. You know, talking about comparable types of institutions and letting the sex be the difference might be the more relevant question.

MERROW: Elizabeth Chang and Barbara Hetrick are both faculty members at Hood College, a small women's college in Frederick, Maryland. They told Barbara that while being professors at a women's college may lack in prestige, it does have its strong points.

TWO WOMEN PROFESSORS AT HOOD COLLEGE

CHANG: I think I'm very happy here. I think that Hood has been very good for me in a way because I think that the attitude of the college, of trying to recognize women for what they are and encourage them to make what they can of themselves, extends to the faculty as well as to the students. Because, I think probably I have had opportunities here to develop my abilities and to get into new areas of activity that I would not have had at a college, say, a predominantly male college or a coeducational college that did not make an effort to encourage women to do what they can.

REINHARDT: Well, in fact, did you choose to come back into a cocoon? Is it easier here than it would be in...

PROFESSORS: (laugh)

REINHARDT: ...in a place where there would be men that you would have to compete with?

CHANG: No, I don't think so at all. I think there are probably more demands on you than, you know, if you were at a place where there were a lot of men, where you could just kind of sit back and teach your courses and not have a lot of other responsibility.

REINHARDT: What are the other demands that you might have been able to avoid at a college where a lot of men teach?

CHANG: Well, I think I've gotten very involved in committee work and other duties that are predominantly administrative in nature. I've also completely developed skills from scratch in learning computing, developing and administering a computer center, something I'd never had experience with before. I can well imagine, this is pure speculation but I can imagine, that at a coeducational or predominantly male institution they would have felt, well that's a man's job. Well, we'll have to bring in a man to this. And I think, you know, that I've had that opportunity here.

HETRICK: It's definitely not an easy road out. One of the characteristics of the small college, and especially a women's college, is that your

responsibilities include much more than teaching in the classroom. It's a private joke among Hood faculty that we'd like to get paid a dollar an hour, because our salaries would increase. In response to an earlier question you had about whether or not a small women's college will help or hinder a professional woman's career, I think the answer has to be yes and no. On the one hand, like Liz mentioned, being in a small college allows you to develop skills. For instance, I would never be a departmental chair at a larger university. I'd never be a departmental chair at a men's college. We would also never be allowed to chair committees or to be on task forces or to administer grants, et cetera. On the other hand, I think it's a sign of the general status of women that women who teach at small colleges are not considered as prestigious as people who teach at the Harvards and Yales and many of the large universities. Partly, I think, it's because those large universities are devoted not to undergraduate teaching, not to women, but are devoted to research and graduate education.

MERROW: Two Hood College professors, Elizabeth Chang and Barbara Hetrick.

REINHARDT: So far, we've looked at women's colleges which have grappled with changing times; that is, declining student enrollment and societal pressures, by either saying yes or no to coeducation.

MERROW: But there's another alternative: have both. That can work in the cluster concept where men's, women's, and co-ed colleges share a large campus, some classes and facilities, but still remain separate institutions. Anna Sklar reports on Scripps College, part of a cluster in Claremont California.

THE CLUSTER SYSTEM AT SCRIPPS COLLEGE

SKLAR: Scripps is located 40 miles east of Los Angeles and shares 250 acres with five other colleges. The Claremont Colleges are modeled after the Oxford system in England. A cluster concept works like this: there are six colleges at Claremont, one graduate school and five undergraduate colleges. Each has its own core curriculum and its own residence halls. All, with the exception of Scripps, are coeducational. Claremont Men's College, which went coeducational in 1976, is a liberal arts school, emphasizing public affairs. Harvard Mudd is a college of engineering and science. Pitzer offers an emphasis in the social and behavioral sciences. And Scripps offers a specialization in the humanities.

Pomona College, with 1300 students, is the largest of the five undergraduate schools, and offers majors in the natural sciences, social sciences and humanities. All the colleges share extensive library facilities, although each has its own smaller, more specialized library collection. The colleges also share a computer center, a book store, and a performing arts center. Students usually take classes at another school when that course is not available at the home campus. So, for example, a student at Scripps who needs an anthropology course, which is not offered at Scripps, will take the class at Pitzer.

Growth has been slow but continual since the beginning of the cluster concept back in 1926 when the college was founded by Ellen Browning Scripps of the Scripps Howard newspaper chain. No one at Scripps is quite sure why their enrollment has continued to grow, while the enrollment at other single sex colleges went down. But Scripps College president John Chandler says that being part of a coeducational university-like environment was important.

CHANDLER: Some of the kinds of social pressures, for example, that impinged on what I call free-standing women's colleges, simply were not as intensive here, as elsewhere.

SKLAR: The interaction between the colleges is primarily educational, and social relationships between students at Scripps and the other colleges at Claremont resemble that between most women's colleges and outside male or co-ed schools. So there are frequent beer busts and dances. But the women live in any one of the seven residence halls at Scripps, which are definitely not coeducational. Most administrators admit that Scripps' identity as a women's college is not as strong as they would like it to be. But there is the feeling that the issues of feminism are irrelevant to their college. Dean of Students Daryl Smith says she reserves her feminism for meetings with administrators from coeducational institutions and rarely thinks about women's issues in a context where there's already a strong support system for women. After all, 50 percent

of the faculty are women and 70 percent of the administration are also women.

SMITH: On a lot of institutional campuses, feminism is a much more prevalent, active force, because there's a lot more to fight. At Scripps, I just have a sense about Scripps: if you've got the college commited to Scripps as a women's institution, where as an institution there's diversity among, say, the chief administrators as to whether they're feminist or not. That has meanings for people. So that our dean of faculty would not claim herself to be a feminist. But she's certainly highly sensitive and conscious about the issue of Scripps as a women's college. Well the question is, if there's not that much to fight, one can go about your life being a woman, without having to fight the system.

SKLAR: To underline Scripps as a place where women get the direction and support they need, the campus Women's Center is located in the basement of Pitzer College, one of the co-educational colleges at Claremont. In Los Angeles, Anna Sklar.

MERROW: Almost everyone we've talked to shares a belief that right now some women students have different needs that can best be met by women's colleges. But what about the future? Barbara asked Martha Church, president of Hood College in Frederick, Maryland, if some day women's colleges will no longer be necessary.

MORE FROM MARTHA CHURCH

CHURCH: I hope so. Other than, I guess, they ought to be around for a choice. But I think eventually, they should be here only for a choice, not for the fact that I think they're absolutely necessary right now. I think it's part of America's pluralism that there ought to be some men's colleges, some black colleges, some women's colleges. But my hope is eventually education in the country will be conscious of what happens at a black college that's important to black students; what happens at a men's college that's important to men. The same thing for women. I think that's going to occur because I think there are sensitive people out there who worry about this. And I think there are enough out there who are going to worry about it that it is going to happen, and it's going to take several generations.

PROFESSOR: Woman that we graduate with undergraduate degrees in mathematics have more choice, almost, than anybody else in terms of getting jobs when they graduate. They have several offers for very well-paying jobs.

STUDENT: You don't have certain worries that you would at a co-ed school. At other coed colleges the girls are all decked out in class and they're trying to impress the men, and they're trying to study and they're trying to do this and that at the same time.

PROFESSOR: I've probably seen more fraternity houses at men's colleges and coeducational colleges than someone who goes to a coeducational school. Because there they tend to have their social life revolving around just their campus. Whereas my social life took in the whole east coast.

PROFESSOR: I majored in philosophy, and although there was pressure at home because it was not a career-oriented decision, I never have regretted the decision. I doubt that I would have moved into that arena had I been competing with men for the attention of the professor.

* * *

REINHARDT: We've heard that women's colleges are coming back strong. But women's colleges are facing the same problems as all colleges and universities.

MERROW: Rising costs and fewer young people. And so some colleges, single sex and co-ed alike, aren't going make it.

REINHARDT: And that's the subject next week on OPTIONS IN EDUCATION, the third program in our four-part series on colleges.

MERROW: And ironically, two of the colleges that are closing were women's colleges. We hope you'll join us.

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MERROW: Material for this program came from Dale Connally, KSJN, St. Paul, Minnesota and Anna Sklar in Los Angeles, California.

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MERROW: This program was written by Barbara Reinhardt and Katharine Ferguson.

REINHARDT: And produced by John Merrow. The Associate Producer is Katharine Ferguson, Assistant Producer Natalie Iglitz. And technical assistance for this program by Dennis Herndon, Maurice Schlesinger, Andy Rosenberg, and Chuck Thompson. I'm Barbara Reinhardt.

MERROW: I'm John Merrow, and this is NPR, National Public Radio.

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